

**DELAWARE COMMISSION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 23, 2008**

Members Present: Ennis, Lardizzzone, Carroll, Corsa, Evans, Harden, Kitson, Lank, Newstadt, Spitzfaden, Thompson, Timberman

Members Excused: Smith and Wasson

Staff Present: Davila and Reid

Guests: Al Carter and Chris Portante (SOS), Charles M. Dorman (VAMC Director), Tim Brooks and Paddy Wilcox (City of Newark), and Ron Sarg (MOAA)

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to our Nations Flag.

Chairman Ennis opened the meeting by commenting on upcoming elections.

Mr. Dorman reported that they had their Welcome Home event for the OEF/OIF veterans on September 17, 2008, and they had their National POW/MIA Recognition event on September 19, 2008. Both events had a nice turn out and went well. The Wilmington VA out-patient customer service scores are the third highest in the nation. They have made a tentative selection for their Associate Director of Operations and are waiting for approval from Washington, DC. They are still recruiting for the Chief of Staff position; as the initial candidate declined their offer. They are still recruiting for Chief of Police and Chief of Facilities. The project to renovate all their ambulatory surgery areas on the third floor has been awarded. He also reported on additional improvements planned for the Wilmington Hospital. He commented on the Georgetown and Dover clinics and discussed plans to improve relations with the Dover AFB by offering support to cover deployment shortfalls. He also discussed services being provided in the Southern New Jersey areas. As usual, the new budget will not be ready on October 1, 2008, and they will be working on a continuing resolution. There was discussion about hiring medical staff, providing services currently not available and back-up support for the clinics. There were questions and discussion about priority levels 7 & 8, Medicaid and veteran co-payments.

Mr. Carter reported that the State budget process started yesterday and that with the change in administration, some reversions will be expected.

Mr. Brooks and Ms. Wilcox from the City of Newark Parade Committee provided a presentation to raise money to renovate the KVV memorial in Newark.

Mr. Reid presented the Delaware Veterans Home operational report for September and talked about an upcoming survey that will be mailed out. Mr. Davila presented concerns about the lack of occupancy in the domiciliary wing versus the dementia wing; discussion followed. Mr. Reid and Commissioner Carroll discussed the volunteer services program.

**MOTION BY HARDEN TO ACCEPT AUGUST COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES,
SECONDED BY LARDIZZZONE, MOTION CARRIED.**

COMMITTEE REPORTS

CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Commissioner Kitson reported on the recent Family Advisory Cemetery Committee (FACC) meeting at the Southern Cemetery. Commissioner Newstadt stated that the next FACC meeting at the Northern Cemetery will be held on October 16, 2008, 1:00 pm. Mr. Davila reported on the physical updates at both cemeteries.

COMMEMORATIVE AFFAIRS

Chairman Ennis reported that the KWVA secured a speaker for Veterans Day. It was requested that each veterans organization donate money to the Veterans Day Fund in support of the annual Veterans Day and Memorial Day ceremonies.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Commissioner Corsa reported that he attended a meeting at the Veterans Home to review admission applications. In January, all temporary waivers will expire and the previous application rules will again apply.

Chairman Ennis reported that as of September 23, 2008, the Veterans Home Fund has a balance of \$99,248.33 and the Friends of the Veterans Home Fund is at \$ 472,211.15.

PERSONNEL

Commissioner Lardizzone reported that as of September 12, 2008, J.J. Jones has resigned from his position as the Southern Cemetery Administrator. A letter has been sent to OMB requesting permission to fill this critical position.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Commissioner Newstadt questioned what had been done in response to the editorial written by Ron Williams about six months ago concerning the Veterans Home. Mr. Carter provided an explanation that prompted a lengthy discussion.

ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS

Newstadt (JWV) – On August 17, 2008, they had their annual picnic. They are continuing their bingo program on the 1st Thursday of every month at the VA Hospital nursing home. The VA Hospital has approved their installation of an aviary that will be maintained much the same as the Veterans Home aquarium; and funded by their poppy drives.

Corsa (VVA) – Commented on the fundraiser the KWVA held at the Green Turtle on Patriots Day. He also reported on the meeting that he attended at the Veterans Home. There was discussion about veterans organizations who wish to donate a plaque to the Veterans Home.

Timberman (CPVA) – On September 15, 2008, their Executive Director, Mr. Wayne Carter, retired and the new Executive Director is Phyllis D. Palabrica.

Kitson (VFW) – The Red, White and Blue Gala will be held on January 31, 2009.

Evans (American Legion) – Attended the 9/11 service at Post 28 in Oak Orchard, as well as the Post 15 groundbreaking ceremony.

Thompson (MCL) – All five detachments are beginning to start up for the 2008 “Toys for Tots” campaign and expect to be in full swing by next month.

Carroll (MOPH) – The MOPH Region I meeting is scheduled for October. The first department meeting will be in Dover at the Golden Corral on October 4, 2008. They have a new National Service Officer replacing Rich Magner; her name is Debbie Frasier and she is currently away in training.

Ennis (KWVA) – They held their department meeting last week. The Glen Miller Band will be at Dover Downs on October 31, 2008, and he is selling tickets.

Lank (MOWW) – Their new MOWW State Commander is Tom Kelly. He offered kudos to the KWVA concerning the event held on Patriots Day at the Cheer Center in Georgetown.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Davila reported to the Commission that Sara Garrison, who wrote a book about the social history of the Vietnam War, requested to speak at the Veterans Day service. But due to time constraints, he suggested she set-up a table to display her book and the Commission agreed.

ELECTIONS

Chairman Ennis report that the votes were tabulated and verified by the Executive Director and the positions for the coming year are as follows: Chairman – Paul Lardizzone and Vice Chairman – Jim Thompson.

ITEMS FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF THE ORGANIZATION

Commissioner Spitzfaden discussed the issue concerning the Veterans Home donation list and stated that the Commission has the authority to approve the items on the donation list, but they have no control over the amount of money that is spent on the items. He suggested that the Commission have some control over the amount of money that is spent on the items when they are approved. Discussion followed.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: OCTOBER 28, 2008 (10:00 AM)

**LOCATION: Robbins Bldg, 802 Silver Lake Blvd, Suite 100
Dover, DE**

ADJOURNED